MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL

No. 17
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REVENGE OF THE LIVING MONOLITH

BY:
DAVID MICHELINIE
MARC SILVESTRI
GEOF ISHERWOOD

Birth Pains;
Or, Backgrounds Aren't Just For Inkers

In the beginning, there was the concept. Or more accurately, there was Jim Owsley — who *had* the concept: "I wanna do *'The Monster That Trashed New York.'* Something on a big scale, like those old '50s monster movies. We're gonna call it" — are ya ready for this? — *"The Revenge Of The Living Monolith"!* And from around the Marvel bullpen, polite snickers began to rise.

Weeks of hammering out plot details followed, as Jim and I decided that while the *action* would indeed take place on a grand scale, the *drama* should unfold on a much smaller stage: the tormented soul of an obsessively driven man. And so we plucked at Ahmet Abdol, taking the slivers of his known existence and fleshing them out, balancing his vision for the future with glimpses of his past, countering his supranormal power with all-too-human needs and frailties. We made him whole; we gave him life. And the snickers turned to jokes.

More weeks passed. Marc Silvestri and Geof Isherwood were pegged for the art team. Pages were drawn. Words were written. We had fun. And then something strange started to happen. Snickers began turning into raised eyebrows and nods of approval. Jokesters began poking their heads through the door and timidly asking, "Uh, can I get a copy of that when it comes out?" And it was time for Jim, Marc, Geof and I to smile. People were starting to realize what we had known all along: that we had a winner on our hands.

Which brings us to here. To wit: my job is to have a great time writing stories. I've done that. *Your* job, on the other hand, is to have a great time *reading* stories.

So get to work already!

David Michelinie
April, 1985

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FRIEND, THE LATE
MORRIE KURAMOTO
WHO THOUGHT THIS WAS A DUMB IDEA.

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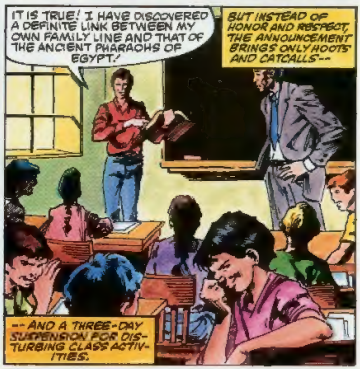
Second Printing

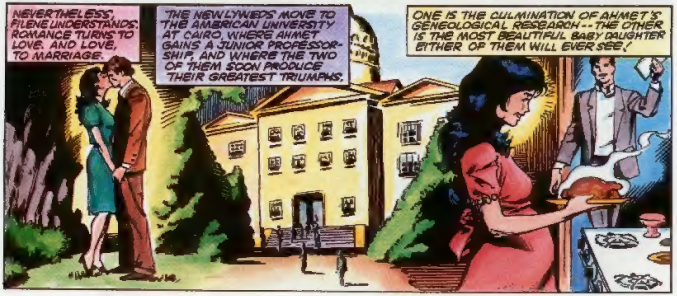
IMAGES SWIRL AND EDDY, FOCUSING SLOWLY, AS IN A DREAM...
AL JIZAH, A SUBURB OF CAIRO, EGYPT. CIRCA 1950.
I AM AHMET ABDOL, THE SON OF HORUS AND OSIRIS, AND THE RULER OF ALL EGYPT!
BUT DO NOT WORRY, MY LOYAL FOLLOWERS, AS MY SUBJECTS YOU WILL BE TREATED FAIRLY AND WELL!
WHAT THEY WILL BE TREATED TO IS THE BABBLING OF A FOOL!

OH, NO! IT IS HASSAN, AND HIS BULLY FRIENDS!
PAY THEM NO MIND, AHMET.
WHAT MIND HAS HE TO PAY, FILENE?
EVERYONE KNOWS THAT "CRAZY ABDOL" IS AS MAD AS A JACKAL!
HE IS JUST PLAYING! WE ARE ALL JUST PLAYING!
YES, BUT ABDOL DOES NOT KNOW THAT! HE TRULY THINKS THAT ONE DAY HE WILL BE KING OF THE EARTH!
SO I SAY WE SHOULD GIVE HIM THAT EARTH--
--NOW!
SPLAT!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, AHMET?
I... I AM FINE, FILENE. THEY...
...SNIFF... THEY DID NOT HURT ME.

IMAGES SHIFT, THEN, MOVING SWIFTLY THROUGH TIME--
-- THROUGH YEARS SPENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION, WHERE AHMET ABDOU'S ONLY FRIENDS ARE BOOKS--
-- AND THE SILENTLY ADMIRING, EVER-SUPPORTIVE FILENE.
ROMANCE BLOSSOMS.

AND RESEARCH PROGRESSES, WITH STUDIES OF HISTORY AND GENEOLOGY FINALLY PRODUCING THAT WHICH HE HAS SOUGHT WITH QUIET NEED EVER SINCE THOSE DARK DAYS IN AN AL JIZAH SCHOOLYARD.
I'VE DONE IT!


IT IS TRUE! I HAVE DISCOVERED A DEFINITE LINK BETWEEN MY OWN FAMILY LINE AND THAT OF THE ANCIENT PHARAOHS OF EGYPT.
BUT INSTEAD OF HONOR AND RESPECT, THE ANNOUNCEMENT BRINGS ONLY HOOTS AND CATCALLS--
-- AND A THREE-DAY SUSPENSION FOR DISTURBING CLASS ACTIVITIES.


NEVERTHELESS, FILENE UNDERSTANDS. ROMANCE TURNS TO LOVE, AND LOVE, TO MARRIAGE.
THE NEWLYWEDS MOVE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AT CAIRO, WHERE AHMET GAINS A JUNIOR PROFESSORSHIP, AND WHERE THE TWO OF THEM SOON PRODUCE THEIR GREATEST TRIUMPHS.
ONE IS THE CULMINATION OF AHMET'S GENEOLOGICAL RESEARCH -- THE OTHER IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BABY DAUGHTER EITHER OF THEM WILL EVER SEE!

BUT THEN THE IMAGES GROW ULTRA-VIOLENT AS AHMET REVEALS HIS FINDINGS TO THE GATHERED SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF CAIRO.
THEREFORE, THOUGH MY RESEARCH IS UNORTHODOX, IT DOES PROVE CONCLUSIVELY THAT THE ANCIENT PHARAOHS OF EGYPT WERE NOT MERE HUMANS. THEY WERE, IN ACTUALITY--
--MUTANTS!
THIS ENABLED THEM TO TAP COSMIC ENERGIES THAT PROVIDED THEM WITH THE SOURCE OF THEIR HERETOFORE MYSTERIOUS POWERS! WIELDING SUCH FORCES, THEY WERE ABLE TO RULE WITH BRILLIANCE FOR OVER--
LIAR!
HE SPEAKS HERESY!
HE MUST BE SILENCED BEFORE HIS FILTH CORRUPTS OUR PEOPLE!
BEFORE HE BLASPHEMES THE NAME OF THE TRUE GOD, ALLAH!
AHMET--!
COME! QUICKLY! WE MUST GET LITTLE SALOME TO SAFETY!
THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
HERETIC!
STOP HIM!
THEY NEVER UNDERSTAND!
VRROOOOMMM

A-A-AHMET! S-SLOW DOWN--!
THEY ARE ON FOOT! WE DO NOT HAVE TO GO SO FAST--!
YOU HAVE LED A SHELTERED LIFE, FILENE! YOU KNOW NOT WHAT SMALL MINDS CAN DO WHEN THEY ARE DESPERATE!
YOU KNOW NOT THE ANGER THEY CAN SHOW! THE HURT THEY CAN BRING! WHEN THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND... WH-WHEN SOMETHING IS NOT LIKE THEM ... THEY--
AHMET! L-LOOK OUT--!
CHILDREN--?!
SSSKKRRRRRKK
THE CAR! I-I CANNOT CONTROL--

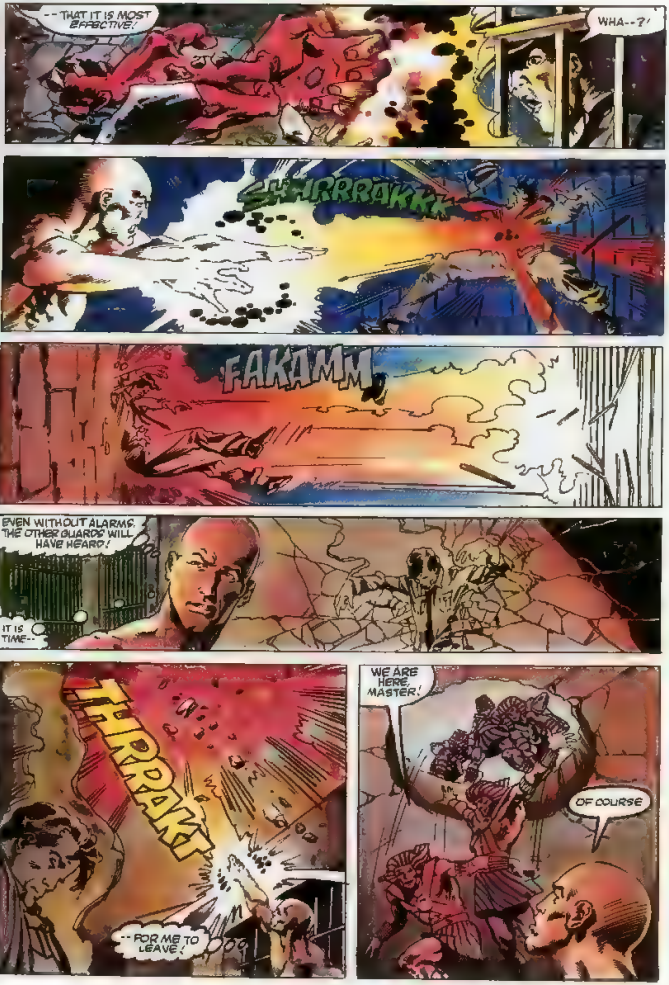
KRASH!
SALOME!
KRUUP!
SKREEEEEEEEEEEEEE...
KRA
POOM!

SALOME! SH-SHE WAS THROWN FREE, AS WAS I! BUT WHAT OF--
WAAAAAH! :SLP: WAAAAAAHH!
--FILENE!
A...AHMET...! H-HELP...!
FLAMES NEARING THE GAS TANK! BUT THE METAL IS TWISTED! FUSED! I-I CANNOT OPEN THE DOOR! I--
--THAT CROWD!
THE MOB FROM THE LECTURE HALL!
YOU! DON'T JUST STAND THERE! CAN'T YOU SEE MY WIFE IS TRAPPED? IN THE NAME OF MERCY--
--HELP ME!
FWOOOOSSHHH
AAAIIIEEEEEEE!
FILEEEEENE--!

GONE.
THE ONLY WOMAN WHO UNDERSTOOD... WH-WHO CARED. THE MOTHER OF MY CHILD.
GONE.
IF ONLY THEY HAD HELPED. SH- SHE MIGHT HAVE... SHE COULD BE...
THOSE BLOODY... FILTHY...
...BASTARDS!
SHHRRRRRAK!
WH...WHAT DID I DO?
H-HOW DID I DO IT? M-MAYBE THEY WERE RIGHT-- I AM MAD.
YES...MY WIFE IS DEAD...AND I AM INSANE.
NO. AHMET ABDOL--
--YOU ARE MUCH MORE THAN YOU THINK, COMTE, AND I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR DESTINY...
...MASTER!
ONCE MORE, THE FRAGILE IMAGES CHANGE...

SHOWING AHMET AND SALOMÉ BEING TAKEN TO A TEMPLE HIDDEN DEEP IN THE DESERT. A SANCTUARY TENDED BY A CENTURIES-OLD CULT THAT WORSHIPS THE PHARAOHS AND AWAITS THEIR RETURN
AHMET IS TOLD THAT HIS WRITINGS HAD DRAWN THEIR ATTENTION, AND THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS MUTANT POWER AT THE AUTOMOBILE WRECK HAD SHOWN THEM THAT HE WAS, INDEED, THE LIVING BODY FOR WHOM THEY HAD BIDED THE AGES
AND SO HE SENDS SALOMÉ AWAY TO A SCHOOL IN MALTA, SHE IS THE ONLY REMNANT OF A PEACE AND HAPPINESS NOW GONE, AND AS SUCH IS EVEN MORE PRECIOUS THAN THE OMNIPOTENCE HER FATHER SO COVETS.
THUS, AS THE LIVING PHARAOH, HE SEEKS TO ABSORB EVEN MORE COSMIC ENERGY, ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIM TO GAIN THE FULL, IMMORTAL POWER OF THE GODS. IT IS A DANGEROUS GAME.
AND THUS RELIEVED OF CONCERNS FOR HIS DAUGHTER, AHMET ABDO... PURSUES HIS DESTINY -- ONLY TO BE THWARTED AT EVERY TURN BY COSTUMED WARRIORS WITH ABILITIES ALMOST AS MIGHTY AS HIS OWN, AS TIME AND AGAIN HIS QUEST FOR POWER IS TAINTED WITH THE BITTER STING OF DEFEAT.
DEFEAT!
DEFEAT...
IMAGES SWIRL AND EDDY, FADING SLOWLY, AS IN A...

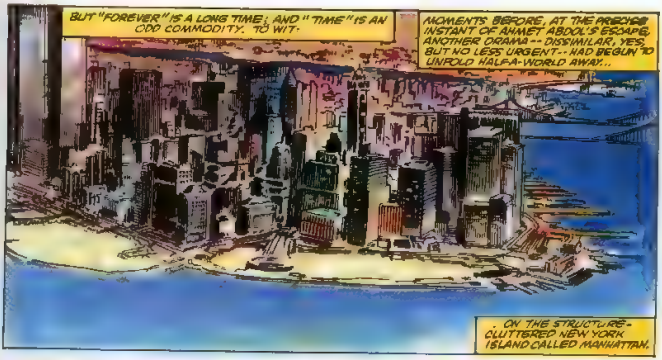
--DREAM
NOOOOOOOOOOOO
MASSAD MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON, CENTRAL EGYPT. NOW.
I AM AHMET ABDOL, THE SON OF HORUS AND OSIRIS, AND I AM THE LIVING PHARAOH. YET I AM KEPT IN A CAGE LIKE AN ANIMAL, HAUNTED BY VISIONS OF THE PAST
THE GODS MOCK ME.
AND YOU HAUNT ME AS WELL, HASSAN. IT IS THE IRONY OF IRONIES THAT YOU SHOULD BE CHOSEN AS MY JAILER.
THE GODS MUST TRULY BE ANGRY
YOU ALWAYS WERE A DREAMER, ABDOL--
--ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT RULIN' THE WORLD. BUT I TOOK THE ROAD TO REAL POWER--AUTHORITY.
THAT'S WHY I'M OUT HERE, AN' YOU'RE IN THERE!
WIMP
FAH! YOU PRATTLE OF POWER, WHILE I POSSESS A MIGHT THAT MOST MEN CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE! TRUE, THESE ELECTRONIC SHACKLES THE GOVERNMENT HAS SEALED TO MY ARMS DO PREVENT ME FROM UNLEASHING THAT POWER
-- BUT THEY CANNOT PREVENT ME FROM FOCUSING IT, TO WEAKEN FROM WITHIN. TO BRODE LIKE DESERT SANDS CHAFING THE PYRAMIDS.
IT IS A SLOW PROCESS, HASSAN, BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL SOON AGREE--


-- THAT IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE!
WHA--?!
SHRRRAKK
FAKAMM
EVEN WITHOUT ALARMS, THE OTHER GUARDS WILL HAVE HEARD!
IT IS TIME--
THRRAK!
-- FOR ME TO LEAVE!
WE ARE HERE, MASTER!
OF COURSE

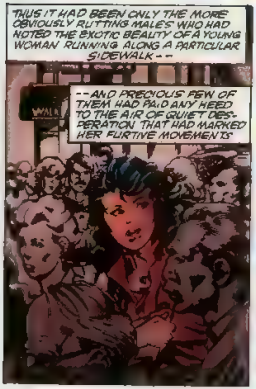
WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR MONTHS!
YES. HOVERING IN VEHICLES JUST BEYOND THE HORIZON, BEHIND CLOUDS. WAITING FOR A SIGN THAT YOUR BID FOR FREEDOM HAD BEGUN! WHEN WE HEARD THE POWER BLAST WE KNEW THE TIME HAD COME!
NATURALLY WERE THOSE NOT MY ORDERS?
WE LIVE TO SERVE MY LORD.
INFIDELS!
THEY ARE LESS THAN INFIDELS. THEY ARE MY SLAVERS!
DESTROY THEM!
PBOOM
ERRRATCH
CHRAK
AG-AGK!

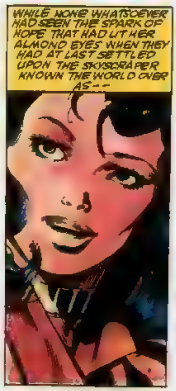
EXCELLENT. OH, AND BY THE WAY--
:OONF:
URNK!
--BRING HIM WITH US.
UH, Y-YES, MASTER
LOOK AT 'IM! WALTZIN' ALONG LIKE HE WAS STROLLIN' THROUGH HIS OWN LIVIN' ROOM! WHILE HIS HENCHMEN ARE TAKIN' BULLETS FOR 'IM WITHOUT A BLINK!
WHADYA EXPECT FROM LUNATICS?
AH, I SEE YOU HAVE SUMMONED THE VEHICLES, AGAIN!. VERY GOOD

I DO GROW WEARY OF THIS CONFLICT..
HE'S GETTIN' AWAY! AN' HE'S TAKIN' ONE OF OUR MEN WITH 'IM!
BLAM
KRAK
KEEP FIRIN'.
MASTER! TWO OF THE LOYAL REMAIN! BUT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO RETURN FOR THEM!
AND IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE SO TO ALLOW THEM TO BE QUESTIONED BY THE INFIDEL INQUISITORS! WE HAVE NO OPTION.
FRAK!
FROOOOOOOOSSHH
THE ELECTROCUTION BANDS THEY WORE WORKED PERFECTLY! THE THREAT OF THEIR BETRAYAL IS ENDED!
JUST AS EVERY THREAT WILL BE CRUSHED!
FOR SOON, WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE MINE SHALL BE MINE AGAIN--
--FOREVER!


BUT "FOREVER" IS A LONG TIME; AND "TIME" IS AN ODD COMMODITY. TO WIT:
MOMENTS BEFORE, AT THE PRECISE INSTANT OF AHMET ABDUL'S ESCAPE, ANOTHER DRAMA -- DISSIMILAR, YES, BUT NO LESS URGENT -- HAD BEGUN TO UNFOLD HALFA-WORLD AWAY...
. ON THE STRUCTURE-CLUTTERED NEW YORK ISLAND CALLED MANHATTAN.

THERE, THE POPULACE HAS LEARNED TO AFFECT A DEFENSIVE POSTURE OF CREATIVE NONCHALANCE
N ESSENCE WHAT THEY DON'T NOTICE WON'T HURT THEM.


THUS IT HAD BEEN ONLY THE MORE OBVIOUSLY RUTTING MALES WHO HAD NOTED THE EXOTIC BEAUTY OF A YOUNG WOMAN RUNNING ALONG A PARTICULAR SIDEWALK --
--AND PRECIOUS FEW OF THEM HAD PAID ANY HEED TO THE AIR OF QUIET DESPERATION THAT HAD MARKED HER FURTIVE MOVEMENTS.

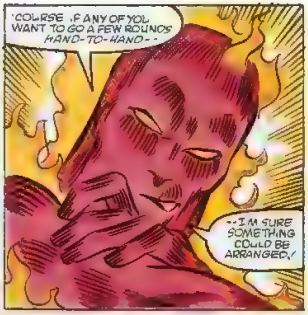

WHILE NONE WHATSOEVER HAD SEEN THE SPARK OF HOPE THAT HAD LIT HER ALMOND EYES WHEN THEY HAD AT LAST SETTLED UPON THE SKYSCRAPER KNOWN THE WORLD OVER AS --

--THE BAXTER BUILDING!
"THERE IT IS! I NEED ONLY CROSS THIS ONE ...AST AVENUE, AND I WILL BE--

--SAFE?
YOU HAVE TRAVELED FAR, FAYAH--BUT YOU WILL GO NO FARTHER!
YOU HAVE BETRAYED THE MASTER--
BEHIND ME, TOO!
--AND FOR THAT YOU MUST PAY THE PRICE!
COME ALONG, BILLY. THIS IS NONE OF OUR AFFAIR.
AW GEE
YOU HAVE TURNED YOUR BACK ON THE ONE TRUE GOD, AND FOR THAT--
--YOU MUST DIE!
FRRRRZZKTH
NOT TODAY, PAL!

CAN'T ANY OF YOU GUYS READ?
CHECK OUT PAGE 214 OF THE COSTUMED LACKEY OPERATIONS MANUAL "DO NOT--REPEAT. DO NOT--ATTEMPT ANY FUNNY STUFF IN FRONT OF FANTASTIC FOUR HEADQUARTERS! ESPECIALLY IF THE HUMAN TORCH IS DROPPING BY FOR A VISIT."
YOU DARE TO INTERFERE?
THEN YOU DIE TOO!
KCHOW
UH UH
PFFT
HE H-KE VAPORIZED THE ENERGY BOLT!
THEN WE MUST ALL FIRE AT ONCE! SURELY EVEN HE CANNOT WITHSTAND A CONCENTRATED BARRAGE!
LOOK, GUYS, GUNS CAN BE FUN AT A SHOOTING RANGE, BUT IN THE MIDDLE OF N.Y.C--
CHUNK
CHUNK
CHUNK

--THEY'RE AN ABSOLUTE NO-NO.


'COURSE, IF ANY OF YOU WANT TO GO A FEW ROUNDS HAND-TO-HAND--
--I'M SURE SOMETHING COULD BE ARRANGED.

NO, HUH? I'M IMPRESSED.
YOU'RE NOT AS STUPID AS I THOUGHT.

YOU ARE JOHNNY STORM, OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
I MUST TALK TO THE REST OF YOUR PEOPLE!
YOU'RE WELCOME

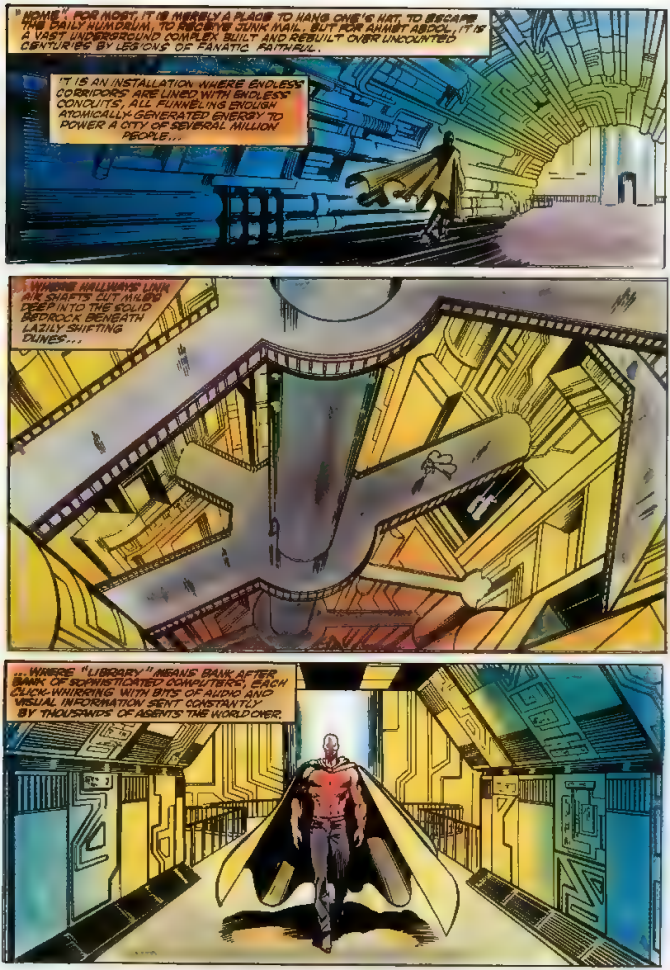
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! IF I DO NOT SPEAK WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR VERY SOON--
--THE ENTIRE WORLD MIGHT BE DESTROYED!

:SIGH: AGAIN?
OKAY, MISS, I GUESS YOU'D BETTER START FROM THE BEGINNING.

AND SO, SLIGHTLY MORE THAN AN HOUR LATER, AT THE PRIVATE FIVE-STORY PENTHOUSE THAT CRAS THE BAXTER BUILDING...
THANKS FOR COMING DOWN FROM CONNECTICUT, REED!
AFTER WHAT YOU TOLD US OVER THE PHONE, JOHNNY, I'D SAY WE HAD LITTLE CHOICE!
THIS IS THE LADY I WAS TALKING ABOUT: FAYAH SAHID!
MS. SAHID, THIS IS REED RICHARDS--MR. FANTASTIC--AND SUE STORM RICHARDS: THE INVISIBLE GIRL.
AND I'M THE SHE-HULK--HIYA!
WHERE DO YOU WANT THIS EXPERIMENTAL DOOHICKEY I BROUGHT DOWN FROM THE FANTASTICAR, REED?
JUST PUT IT IN THE HALLWAY, SHE-HULK. I'LL INSTALL IT LATER.
AND, THANKS.
NOW, MS. SAHID, I THINK YOU'D BETTER TELL US YOUR STORY IN DETAIL, SO WE--WE KNOW JUST EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.
OF COURSE. UNTIL RECENTLY I WAS A FOLLOWER OF THE FORBIDDEN ARAB MESSIAH, AHMET ABDOL. BUT MERE DAYS AGO I CAME TO REALIZE--
--THAT HE IS A MADMAN!

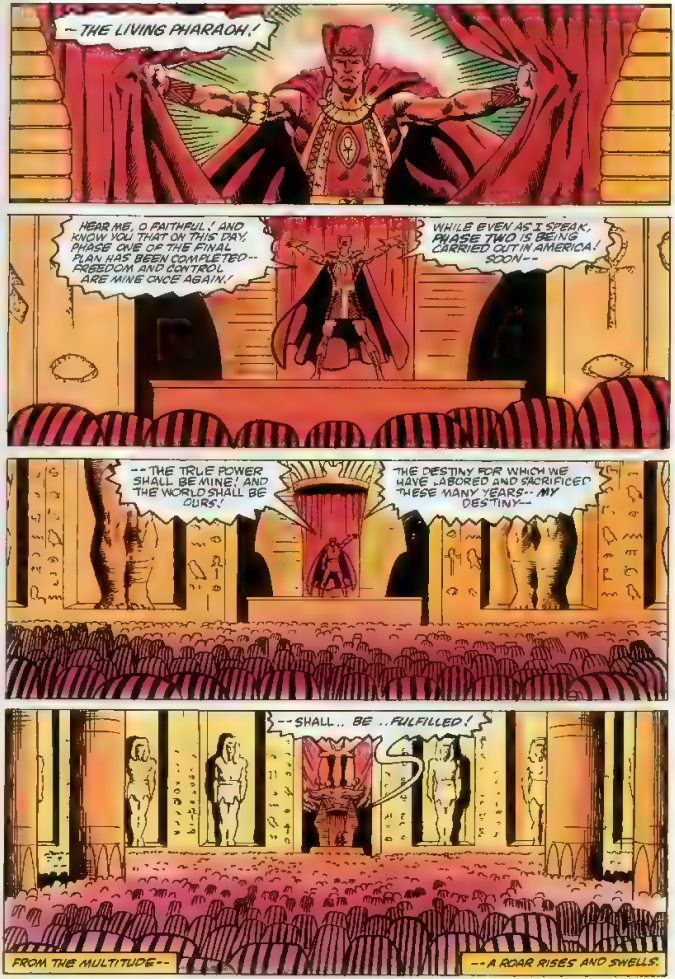
I DISCOVERED, QUITE BY ACCIDENT, THAT HE WAS DEVELOPING A MACHINE THAT COULD ALTER BRAINWAVES, THAT WOULD MAKE THE ENTIRE WORLD BOW DOWN TO KING ABDOL!
AND WHILE WORSHIP IS ONE THING, SUBJUGATION IS QUITE ANOTHER! SO I STOLE A KEY COMPONENT FROM THE MACHINE--
--AND FLED TO AMERICA, HOPING THAT THE WORLD-RENOWNED CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP ABDOL'S INSANE PLAN!
YEP, THAT'S US, ALL RIGHT--CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE!
YOUR COURAGE IS EXEMPLARY, MRS. SAHID. I'LL ANALYZE THIS COMPONENT IMMEDIATELY, AND, SINCE ABDOL TRIED TO KILL YOU ONCE--
--SHE-HULK! DOUBLE-CHECK THE BUILDING'S SECURITY SYSTEMS! JOHNNY, YOU STAY WITH MS. SAHID.
UH, PARDON, BUT WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE SHE-HULK TO REMAIN INSTEAD?
THE GREEN WOMAN'S STRENGTH IS LEGENDARY EVEN IN MY NATIVE EGYPT AND I WOULD FEEL SO SAFE WITH HER GUARDING ME.
WELL, HOW 'BOUT THEM APPLES, "CHAMP"?
YEAH, JUST FORGET I SAVED HER LIFE THIS AFTERNOON!
HMPH!

JOHNNY ?
YEAH, I KNOW: "DOUBLE-CHECK THE SECURITY SYSTEMS".
AND IF I HAVE TIME AFTER THAT, MAYBE I'LL VACUUM THE CARPET AND POLISH THE SILVER, TOO!
NUTS.
SO, THEY'VE HEARD OF ME ALL THE WAY OVER IN EGYPT, EH?
OH, MOST CERTAINLY SHE-HULK I AND MY PEOPLE KNOW--
-- ALL ABOUT YOU...!
IN THE WARMTH OF FLATTERY, THE SUBTLE CHILL OF MENACE IS LOST...
WHILE AN OCEAN AWAY, IN AN OLDER LAND, THE CARVED STONE EYES OF ANCIENT PHARAOHS GAZE BLINDLY OVER THE SANDS OF A NIGHT-COOLED DESERT.
AS BELOW, THOSE SANDS, A MODERN PHARAOH WALKS.
IT IS GOOD TO BE HOME ONCE AGAIN.


"HOME." FOR MOST, IT IS MERELY A PLACE TO HANG ONE'S HAT, TO ESCAPE THE DAILY HUM-DRUM, TO RECEIVE JUNK MAIL. BUT FOR ARMIET ABDUL, IT IS A VAST UNDERGROUND COMPLEX BUILT AND REBUILT OVER UNCOUNTED CENTURIES BY LEGIONS OF FANATIC FAITHFUL.
"IT IS AN INSTALLATION WHERE ENDLESS CORRIDORS ARE LINED WITH ENDLESS CONDUITS, ALL FUNNELING ENOUGH ATOMICALLY GENERATED ENERGY TO POWER A CITY OF SEVERAL MILLION PEOPLE...
...WHERE HALLWAYS LINK AIR SHAFTS CUT HIGHER DEEP INTO THE SOLID BEDROCK BENEATH LAZILY SHIFTING DUNES...
...WHERE "LIBRARY" MEANS BANK AFTER BANK OF SOPHISTICATED COMPUTERS, EACH CLICK-WHIRRING WITH BITS OF AUDIO AND VISUAL INFORMATION SENT CONSTANTLY BY THOUSANDS OF AGENTS THE WORLD OVER.

IT IS A PLACE WHOSE "GARAGE" HOUSES ENOUGH ARMORED HIGH-TECH VEHICLES TO TURN HALF THE WORLD'S DICTATORS GREEN WITH ENVY--
--AND THE OTHER HALF WHITE WITH FEAR.
IT IS A REALM WHOSE CONTROL CENTER RIVALS ANYTHING THAT WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW COULD POSSIBLY MANUFACTURE. AND WHERE THE SOFT HUM OF ELECTRONICS IS JOINED BY THE EQUALLY SOFT, EQUALLY INSISTENT CHANT OF "MASTER."
"MASTER"...
MASTER.'
YOUR RAIMENT.
AND, UH, WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH YOUR GUEST, MY LORD?
AH, YES-- HASSAN.
PLACE HIM HERE, WHERE HE CAN SEE EVERY-THING.
IT IS TIME FOR HIM TO LEARN HIS LESSON.

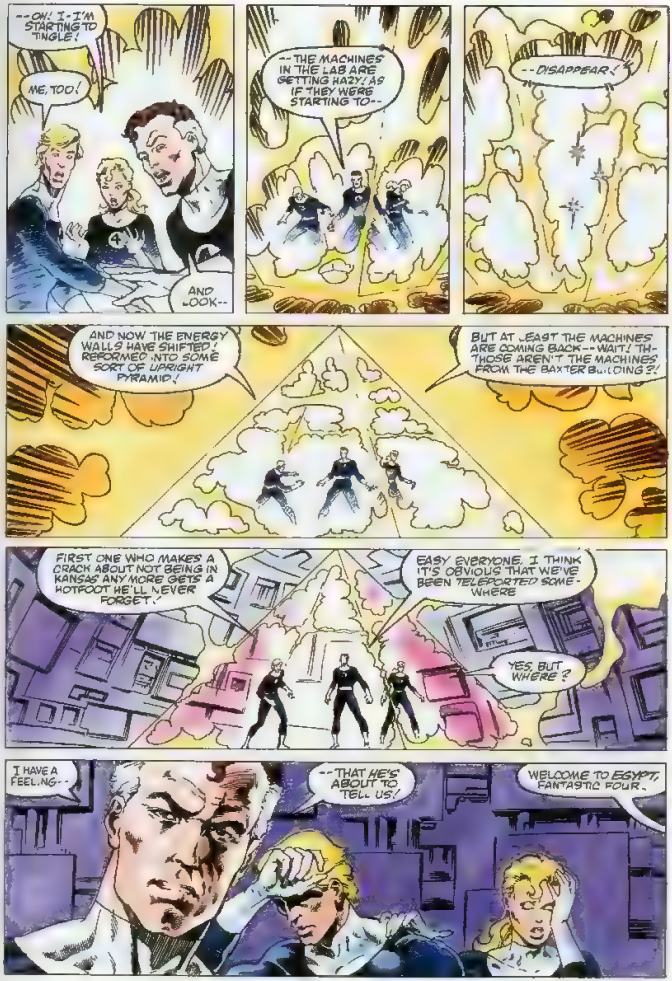
LOOK AROUND YOU, DISCIPLE OF AUTHORITY. AT THE ARMIES, THE MACHINES, THE BOUNDLESS RESOURCES AND TELL ME--
--WHO HAS THE POWER NOW?
YA CAN CHANGE THE RULES -- I COUGH-- BUT YER STILL JUST PLAYIN' A GAME.
WIMP
WHEN I AM THROUGH WITH YOU, HASSAN, YOUR BODY WILL BE SPREAD WITH MANURE AND YOU WILL BE STAKED N THE DESERT
THE BEETLES WILL EAT YOUR EYES.
FROM A NEARBY SERVANT, AN INVOLUNTARY SHIVER
AND MOMENTS LATER, AFTER THE ORDER TO "ASSEMBLE THE MULTITUDE" HAS BEEN GIVEN AND CARRIED OUT...
SILENCE! BE STILL AND ATTEND! FOR WE ARE GRACED THIS MOST HOLY OF DAYS WITH THE PRESENCE (WITH THE PERSONIFICATION OF HORUS AND OSIRIS) LORD MASTER AHMET ABDOL--


--THE LIVING PHARAOH!
HEAR ME, O FAITHFUL! AND KNOW YOU THAT ON THIS DAY, PHASE ONE OF THE FINAL PLAN HAS BEEN COMPLETED-- FREEDOM AND CONTROL ARE MINE ONCE AGAIN!
WHILE EVEN AS I SPEAK, PHASE TWO IS BEING CARRIED OUT IN AMERICA! SOON--
--THE TRUE POWER SHALL BE MINE! AND THE WORLD SHALL BE OURS!
THE DESTINY FOR WHICH WE HAVE LABORED AND SACRIFICED THESE MANY YEARS-- MY DESTINY--
--SHALL.. BE ..FULFILLED!
FROM THE MULTITUDE--
--A ROAR RISES AND SWELLS.

WHILE IN MANHATTAN...
HMM, THAT'S ODD. THE ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS IN THIS COMPONENT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN THROWN TOGETHER AT RANDOM. AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THEY SERVE NO PURPOSE AT ALL--
REED--!
BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WHAT IS IT?
INTRUDER ALERT! OUR AIR SPACE HAS BEEN BREACHED!
THERE!
FOUR AIRCRAFT HOVERING OVER THE BAXTER BUILDING. LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TAKING UP POSITIONS AT THE CORNERS.
BUT WHERE ARE THE REST OF YOUR PEOPLE?
THEY'RE PROBABLY AT BATTLE STATIONS UPSTAIRS.
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHERE I'M GOING TO BE IN ABOUT THIRTY SECONDS.
NO...

I THINK NOT.
CLIK
ZAP
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
WHA--ENERGY BEAMS! COMING FROM THE ROOF!
NO--
"--THEY'RE COMING FROM THOSE AIRCRAFT, AND NOW OTHER BEAMS ARE CONNECTING THE CRAFT TO EACH OTHER. IT'S LIKE THEY'RE FORMING SOME SORT OF GIANT--

"--PYRAMID, UPSIDE-DOWN! IT'S CUTTING INTO THE TOP OF THE BAXTER BUILDING--
"--GOING THROUGH THE UPPER LAB LEVELS, AND FOCUSING ON--"
--YOUR PURSE?! FAYAH! WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON?
IT DOES NOT MATTER, GREEN WOMAN. -THE DEED IS DONE!
THESE WALLS ARE SOLID ENERGY! WE'RE TRAPPED!
MAYBE IF I FLAME ON--!
NO! WE DON'T KNOW THE SITUATION! YOU MIGHT SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION IF--

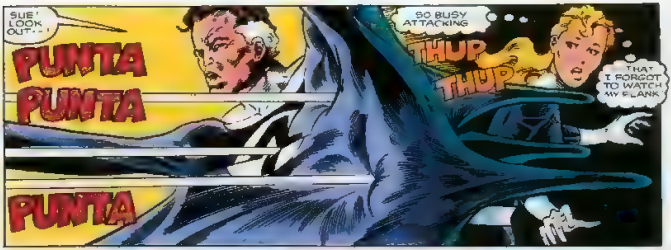

--OH! I--I'M STARTING TO TINGLE!
ME, TOO!
AND LOOK--
--THE MACHINES IN THE LAB ARE GETTING HAZY, AS IF THEY WERE STARTING TO--
--DISAPPEAR!
AND NOW THE ENERGY WALLS HAVE SHIFTED! REFORMED INTO SOME SORT OF UPRIGHT PYRAMID!
BUT AT LEAST THE MACHINES ARE COMING BACK--WAIT! TH-THOSE AREN'T THE MACHINES FROM THE BAXTER BUILDING?!
FIRST ONE WHO MAKES A CRACK ABOUT NOT BEING IN KANSAS ANYMORE GETS A HOTFOOT HE'LL NEVER FORGET!
EASY EVERYONE. I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS THAT WE'VE BEEN TELEPORTED SOMEWHERE
YES, BUT WHERE?
I HAVE A FEELING--
--THAT HE'S ABOUT TO TELL US!
WELCOME TO EGYPT, FANTASTIC FOUR.

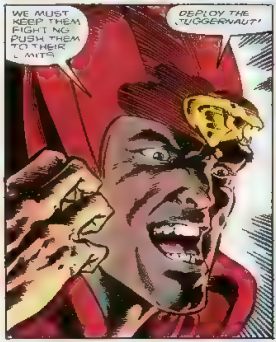
AND WHO THE SAM HILL ARE YOU?
I AM THE LIVING PHARAOH INSOLENT DOG, AND YOU--
--ARE ABOUT TO BECOME NO MORE! FOLLOWERS.
KILL THEM
REED PLANNED FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS! HE SET UP CIRCUITRY WITHIN THE BUILDING THAT WOULD INSTANTLY BLOCK ALL OUTSIDE TRANSMISSION OF ENERGY.
IF ONLY I CAN REACH ONE OF THE--
--SWITCHES!
PHOT

DID IT!
YOU ARE TOO LATE, SHE-HULK! AND YOU ARE A FOOL! I WOULD NEVER TRULY BETRAY THE MASTER! THIS ENTIRE EPISODE HAS BEEN A TRICK, A RUSE TO SEPARATE YOU FROM YOUR FELLOW WARRIORS!
JUST BE GRATEFUL THAT THE MASTER HAD NO NEED OF YOU--
--ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN LURED INTO THE TRANSPORT BEAMS AS WELL
--AND WOULD NOW BE SUFFERING THE SAME FATE AS YOUR COMRADES!
'TRANSPORT'.. ?
REED/SUE! ANSWER ME!
JOHNNY!
JOHN!
ALL RIGHT, SISTER!
KRUNCH
TALK!
THE TIME FOR THAT IS OVER
I MUST LEAVE
ONCE THROUGH THIS WINDOW, AND ABOARD THE HOVERCRAFT, I WILL BE FREE. MY MISSION A SUCCESS!

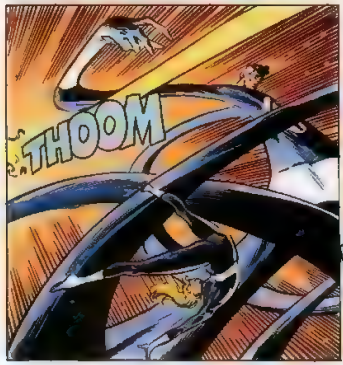
AND THE MASTER WILL AT LAST KNOW THAT I AM WORTHY OF ...
KBOOM
WHAT ..?
TOO BAD SWEET HEART! THOSE WINDOWS ARE MADE OF LEXAN - TOUGH AS STEEL!
NOW YOU'D BETTER START TELLING ME JUST WHAT'S GOING ON HERE -
BEFORE I START PLUCKING YOUR LIMBS LIKE DAIRY PETALS!
4
SUE--!
I SEE HIM LITTLE BROTHER!
CHAK
JOHNNY AND SUE ARE DOING WELL BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN HOLD OUT!

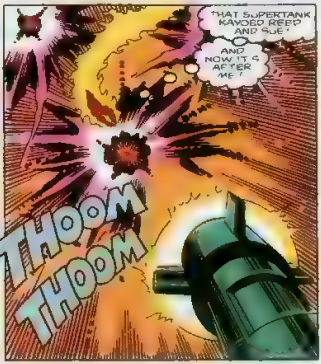
FOR EVERY HANDFUL OF THESE "FOLLOWERS" WE TAKE DOWN, ANOTHER DOZEN SEEM TO SPRING UP IN THEIR PLACE!
WHILE ABOVE...
HAVE YOU FOUND THE CORRECT FREQUENCY?
NOT YET, MASTER.
CONTINUE THE ANALYSIS.
BRAKATAKATAK
PTING
BEOWW
ONE GOOD THING ABOUT BEING ABLE TO CAST A MENTAL FORCE FIELD: NOT ONLY DOES IT MAKE A DANDY DEFENSE MECHANISM--
--BUT BY THRUSTING IT OUTWARDS--
THAKATHAK
"--IT CAN BE TURNED INTO ONE HECKUVA GOOD ATTACK WEAPON!"
PAKASH


SUE! LOOK OUT--!
PUNTA
PUNTA
PUNTA
SO BUSY ATTACKING
THUP
THUP
THAT I FORGOT TO WATCH MY FLANK


WE MUST KEEP THEM FIGHTING PUSH THEM TO THEIR LIMITS
DEPLOY THE JUGGERNAUT!

REED
WHAT THE-


THOOM


THAT SUPERTANK KAYOED REED AND SUE!
AND NOW IT'S AFTER ME!
THOOM
THOOM

BTOOM
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO SEE HOW THE PHARAOH'S NEW TOY OPERATES
THOOM
THOOM
WITH HALF OF ITS GUTS
BTOOM
- MELTED TO SLAG

THE READINGS ARE COMPLETE MASTER. I HAVE MADE THE PROPER ADJUSTMENTS.
EXCELLENT.
CEASE THE ATTACK
HUH?
YES MASTER
YES
THERE'S NO MORE NEED FOR HOSTILITIES. THE PLOY HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE
YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE INFOIL'S. BECAUSE YEARS AGO YOU WERE BATHED IN COSMIC RADIATION DURING A TEST FLIGHT INTO SPACE. THAT IS WHAT GAVE YOU YOUR UNIQUE POWERS.
AND SINCE MY POWER IS ALSO LINKED TO COSMIC FORCES, YOU WILL NOW HELP ME USE THAT POWER TO GAIN MY DESTINY.
THAT MUST BE WHY HE DIDN'T BRING THE SHE-HULK. SHE WASN'T WITH US ON THAT FLIGHT.
NICE TRY MISTER BUT THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE GONNA HELP YOU.
AH, BUT YOU ALREADY HAVE. WHILE YOU FOUGHT SENSORS IN THE MACHINES AROUND THIS ROOM WERE ABLE TO ANALYZE THE WAVELENGTH OF YOUR COSMIC AURA.
MYSTIC ENTITY'S THEN PROGRAMMED A COUNTER WAVELENGTH INTO THE OSCILLATION CIRCUITS OF THIS ANTI-PROJECTOR.
A WAVELENGTH THAT WILL NULLIFY YOUR VERY CONSCIOUSNESS!

"NULLIFY"--?
SUE QUICKLY! A FORCE FIELD--!
ZZ-ZZZ-ZZZZZATCH!
AS YOU AMERICANS SAY REED RICHARDS, "TOO LITTLE.
AND FAR FAR TOO LATE!!"
MANHATTAN
IT IS FAYAH! SHE CANNOT GET TO US! SHE CANNOT ESCAPE.
OUR INSTRUCTIONS ARE CLEAR! THE ELECTROCUTION BAND AROUND HER THROAT MUST BE ACTIVATED! FOR THE MASTER'S PLAN.
SHE MUST DIE!
WAIT! THE DECISION CANNOT BE OURS! IT MUST COME FROM THE MASTER HIMSELF!
FOR A MOMENT, THE DEADLY FINGER HESITATES QUAVERING

AH, YOU ARE AWAKE WITHIN YOUR CRYSTAL SARCOPHAGUS EH, RICHARDS*GOOD!
THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE FATE I HAVE PLANNED FOR YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS
THESE MACHINES YOU SEE, WERE BUILT TO DRAW OFF THE COSMIC ENERGY THAT YOUR RADIATION ALTERED BODIES ABSORB CONSTANTLY THEY WILL THEN FOCUS THAT ENERGY ON ME ..
. IN SUCH QUANT TIES THAT I WILL BE ABLE TO OVERRIDE THE NATURAL INTERFERENCE THAT HAS KEPT ME FROM ABSORBING SUCH ENERGY AT WILL IN THE PAST. AND THEN!
MASTER!
THERE HAS BEEN A PROBLEM WITH THE STRIKE TEAM IN NEW YORK. AN AGENT CODE-NAMED FAYAN HAS BEEN TRAPPED WITH NO MEANS OF ESCAPE! THE SQUAD AWAITS YOUR INSTRUCTIONS
ALMA*?
THEY DARE INTERRUPT W TH SUCH PALTRY MATTERS?
YOU HAVE SEALED YOUR DOOM, FOOL! I ORDER YOU TO LEAP FROM YOUR CRAFT! AT ONCE!
AND BE GRATEFUL THAT I HAVENT THE TIME TO THINK OF A HARSHER
B-BUT, MASTER! PLEASE! LOOK--!
WHA-- THAT WOMAN! SHE SH-SHE'S.

SALOME!
MY DAUGHTER!
SHE RETURNED FROM MALTA SECRETLY, MASTER, AND INSISTED ON BEING PART OF THIS PROJECT. SHE WANTED TO PROVE THAT SHE WAS NOT A CHINA DOLL TO BE PROTECTED, THAT HER RIGHTFUL PLACE WAS BY YOUR SIDE!
AND YOU ALLOWED HER TO PLACE HER LIFE AT RISK? YOU WILL PRAY FOR YOUR OWN DEATH BY THE TIME I AM THROUGH!
H BUT MASTER--!
WE HAD NO CHOICE. HER WORD IS AS YOURS! SHE IS, AFTER ALL, BLOOD OF THE BLOOD!
YES SHE IS! OF MY BLOOD
SHE IS MY DAUGHTER
THE SOLE LINK TO THE ONLY PEACE I'VE EVER KNOWN
BUT IF I ALLOW HER TO LIVE SH- SHE COULD BE MADE TO TALK!
A-AND PERHAPS VERY QUICKLY!
SHE COULD DESTROY MY BEST, PERHAPS MY LAST, CHANCE TO GAIN WHAT I HAVE SOUGHT SINCE CHILDHOOD! THAT WHICH IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!
I... I SHOULD BE STRONG!
I SHOULD DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO!
I-

I LOVE HER
SHE MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ANYONE IN L.A.
I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
I KNEW YA COULDN'T HIT IT
I KNEW YA, CHICKEN OL' YA BALD TOPPED PANSY! YA ALWAYS DID HAVE THE SPINE OF A FLY
I AHHAN PLEASE STOP
'PHAROAH MY BUTT YA WERE A WIMP IN SCHOOL
PLEASE
YEKA WIMP NOW
—AN YA ALWAYS AT A WIMP
YA HEARD ME A LIL A WIMP! A
ALLAH! HHS EVEN

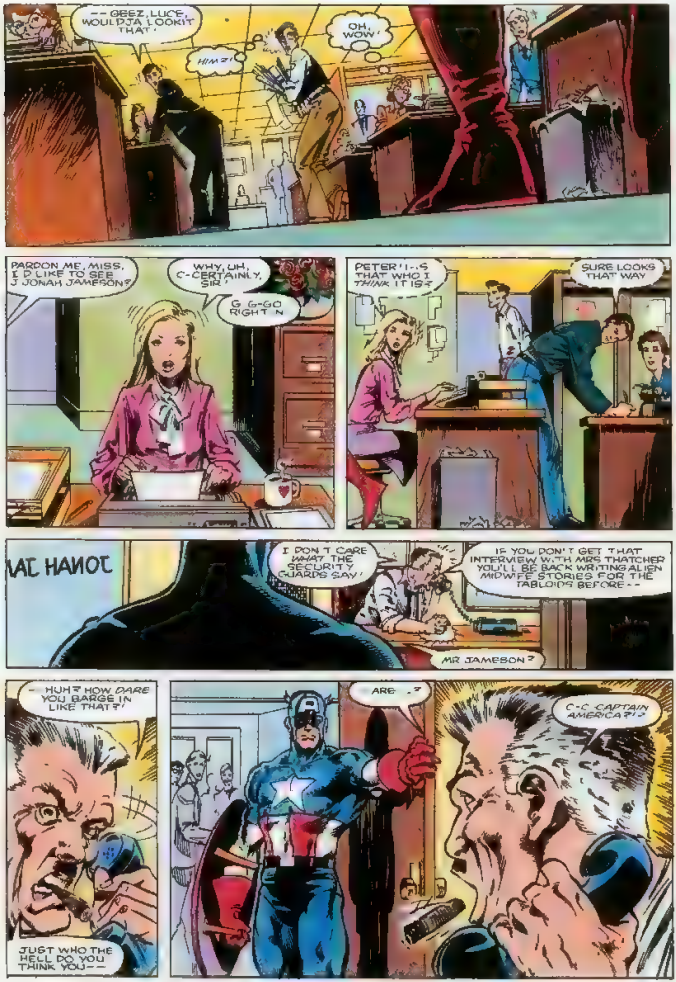
SLAM!
WHA-?!
GLK!
BRRAAASSHH!!
GOOD
GO.
SEE?! S SEE YOU BULLY?
I IM NOT A W MA

I SNIFF, I.
NO!
I-IT IS DONE!
THE TIME FOR THE PAST IS PAST!
I AM THE FUTURE!
THE MASTER'S EYES! THEY ARE WILD!
LIKE THE JACKALS OF THE DESERT!
LET THE INFIDELS BEWARE! THEY HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING FROM ME! ALL SAVE THAT WHICH I WAS DESTINED TO BE!
BUT THAT WILL BE ENOUGH!
SLAK
KLAK
NO LONGER SHALL I BE AHMET ABDOL, THE LIVING PHARAOH, SUBJECT TO THE PERSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT OF A BLIND, UNFEELING WORLD!
NOW I AM MORE.
I AM THE TRUE SEED OF HORUS AND OSIRIS!
I AM--

--THE LIVING MONOLITH!
AND I SHALL HAVE MY REVENGE!

I-I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE MASTER SO ENRAGED
HE EVEN LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM HIS PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS!
PERHAPS THE ARTIFICIAL NATURE OF THIS TRANSFORMATION
YOU!
IT WAS YOUR KIND WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY DAUGHTER'S DEATH!
I SHOULD KILL YOU.
BUT I NEED YOU ALIVE, TO CONTINUE FOCUSING THE COSMIC ENERGIES THAT KEEP ME IN THIS FORM NEVERTHELESS
I DO NEED AN EXAMPLE SOMETHING TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE WORLD THE EXTENT OF MY POWER
SO I'LL NOT DESTROY YOU--I'LL DESTROY YOUR HOME! YES! THAT WILL MAKE A MOST FITTING MEMORIAL FOR SALOME!
THE SMOLDERING RUBBLE OF THE ONCE MIGHTY METROPOLIS CALLED
"--NEW YORK!"
AND THAT'S IT IN A NUTSHELL, CAP!
AVENGER'S MANSION, HOME OF THE EASTERN SEABOARD'S MOST VALIANT FIGHTING TEAM-
THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE DISAPPEARED, AND I NEED HELP!

- WHERE CAPTAIN AMERICA TENDS A SOLEMN VIGIL AT MONITOR DUTY
I'M AFRAID THE OTHER AVENGERS ARE IN CALIFORNIA. SHE-HULK IS SITTING THE WEST COAST COUNTERPARTS BUT IT MIGHT BE WISE TO PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY IN THIS MATTER ANYWAY --
-- TO INVESTIGATE BEFORE RUSHING IN AND MAYBE CAUSING EVEN MORE HARM. I'D SAY THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO DECIDE PER THE NATURE OF THAT "ENERGY PYRAMID" YOU MENTIONED
YOU MEAN BRING IN SCIENTISTS. THE GOVERNMENT THAT SORT OF THING?
NO. THAT WOULD GENERATE RED TAPE WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO DEAL WITH
WE NEED SOMEONE WITH SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE. SOMEONE WE CAN TRUST
PREFERABLY SOMEONE WHO'S WORKED WITH BOTH THE FF AND THE AVENGERS IN THE PAST
HMMM
KLIKITTY KLIK
KLAK
SO, THE OL' MICHOLIMS PICKED UP OVER MANLEY? FINE BY ME. BUT SOMEHOW I DOUBT THAT HE'S LISTED IN THE YELLOW PAGES
SPIDER-MAN
HEIGHT 5'10
WEIGHT 165 lbs
AREA OF ACTIVITY NEW YORK CITY
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE
HOW THE HECK ARE WE GOING TO FIND HIM?
DAILY BUGLE
AND IN ANSWER, MOMENTS LATER AT THE SKYSCRAPER OFFICES OF NEW YORK'S LARGEST DAILY NEWSPAPER
AH, C'MON, LUCY, GIMME A BREAK. JUST ONE DRINK AFTER WORK. THAT'S ALL I


-- GEEZ, LUCE, WOULDJA LOOKIT THAT!
HM?!
OH, WOW!
PARDON ME, MISS. I'D LIKE TO SEE J JONAH JAMESON?
WHY, UH, C-CERTAINLY, SIR!
G G-GO RIGHT IN
PETER!..S THAT WHO I THINK IT IS?
SURE LOOKS THAT WAY
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE SECURITY GUARDS SAY!
IF YOU DON'T GET THAT INTERVIEW WITH MRS THATCHER YOU'LL BE BACK WRITING ALIEN MIDWIFE STORIES FOR THE TABLOIDS BEFORE--
MR JAMESON?
-- HUH? HOW DARE YOU BARGE IN LIKE THAT?!
JUST WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU--
ARE--?
C-C CAPTAIN AMERICA?!

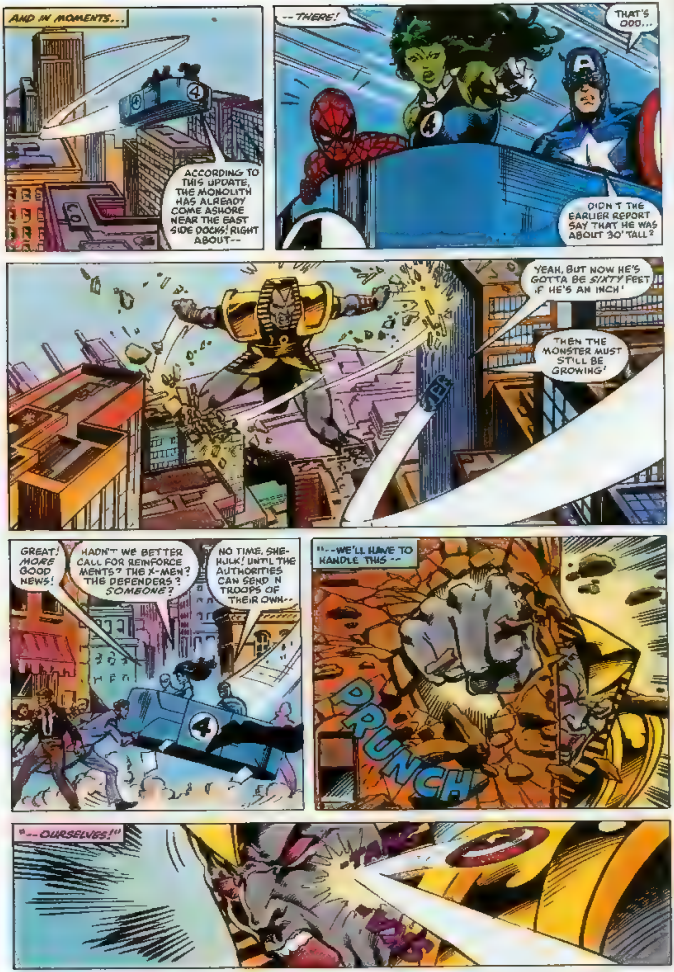
GOSH, CAP, COME ON IN!
I'VE BEEN AN ADMIRER OF YOURS EVER SINCE THE BIG WAR--DOUBLYA-DOUBLYA TWO!
CLICK
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
HAVE A CIGAR? STRAIGHT FROM HAVA--ER, VIRGINIA!
THANK YOU, MR. JAMESON, BUT ACTUALLY, I'M LOOKING FOR ONE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES.
A PETER PARKER.
PARKER?! HMPH!
HIS NAME APPEARS ON QUITE A NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOMEONE I NEED VERY MUCH TO CONTACT. SPIDER-MAN. I THOUGHT MR. PARKER MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP ME FIND HIM.
THAT LITTLE GLORY-STEALER!
AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, CAPTAIN, PARKER'S HERE RIGHT NOW, FILLING OUT A PAY VOUCHER IN--EH, MISS KWESTON, WHERE'D THAT PARKER KID GO?
I DON'T KNOW, MR. JAMESON. HE JUST... LEFT
PRESENTLY...
I'VE TRIED PARKER'S APARTMENT, AND NOW HIS P. ACE OF BUSINESS. I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO
YO, FLAG
I HEAR YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME!
THAT WAS PRETTY QUICK, MISTER!
CHALK IT UP TO ONE PEEVED INTELLIGENCE NETWORK.
TO SAY NOTHING OF THE FACT THAT I HAPPEN TO BE PETER PARKER!
I NEED YOUR HELP, SPIDER-MAN. I CAN'T EXPLAIN HERE, BUT YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT IT'S VITAL!
HEY, IF A GUY CAN'T TAKE YOUR WORD, HE MIGHT AS WELL THROW IN THE COWL!
LEAD ON, MC CAP!

AND BOOM...
THIS IS THE COMPONENT I FOUND IN FAVIAN'S PURSE SPIDER-MAN...IT SEEMED TO BE WHAT THE PYRAMID ENERGY WAS FOCUSING ON
THE TECHNOLOGY'S PRETTY ADVANCED SHE-HULK. BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK TOO COMPLICATED. I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIGURE IT OUT IF I HAD EQUIPMENT THAT WAS SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH
WELL NORMALLY REED'S REAL PICKY ABOUT WHO HAS ACCESS TO HIS LAB STUFF BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WILL THESE DO?
"DO"? HECK, I COULD PROBABLY DEVELOP A FASTER THAN-LIGHT DRIVE ON MY LUNCH HOUR WITH MACHINES LIKE THESE
THEN LET'S GET TO IT!
AND SO THEY DO...
OR RATHER, SPIDER-MAN DOES CALLING ON HIS SCIENCE EDUCATION AND HIS NATURAL INTUITIVENESS, HE PONDERS THE MYSTERIOUS COMPONENT
DISSECTING AND PROBING...
ANALYZING AND TESTING!
WHILE ALL HIS COMPANIONS CAN DO IS WAIT, AND FIDGET, AND PRETEND THAT WORRY ISN'T GNAWING ON THEIR NERVES LIKE CANNIBAL WORMS
UNTIL...
WELL GUYS I'VE DONE IT
MAYBE
I THINK
LEAST-WAYS I'VE ISOLATED THE ENERGY CONFIGURATION THAT SEEMS TO MAKE THIS THING TICK!
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS SEE IF IT WORKS!
AND FOR THAT-

"-- I'VE SET UP TRANSMITTER UNITS ON THE CORNERS OF THE ROOF, AND LINKED THEM TO THIS REMOTE TRIGGERING CONTROL
"THEY'RE TUNED TO THE SAME ENERGY WAVELENGTH, SO THEY SHOULD SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE AS THOSE HOVERCRAFT SHE-HULK WAS TALKING ABOUT."
'COURSE EVEN IF THEY WORK WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'LL ACTUALLY DO. BUT THEN I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!
WISH ME LUCK, GUYS
JUST A MOMENT SPIDER MAN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE GETTING INTO HERE, AND WHISE TACTICS DICTATE THAT THE STRONGEST AMONG US SHOULD TAKE THE RISK
SHE HULK GOES
HUH?!?
ANY T' ME YOU'RE READY WEB SLINGER'-- LET 'ER RIP!
NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE! THIS ISN'T "MIKEY MILQUETOAST" YOU'RE TALKING TO!
I'M SPIDER-MAN! I'M STRONG AND I'M AGILE, AND--
I FEEL LIKE I'M TALKING TO A BRICK WALL
SORRY, BUT THE DECISION IS FINAL
WHILE CONTEMPORANEOUSLY AT LOGUARDIA AIRPORT IN QUEENS
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT CONCORDE JUST SWOOPED IN LIKE IT WAS HEADIN' FOR ITS OWN PRIVATE PARKIN' PLACE. NO FLIGHT PLAN NO RADIO SIGNAL, NOTHIN'
DON'T WORRY FRANK--

"--THE SECURITY BOYS ARE TAKING CARE OF IT RIGHT NOW!"
THE MARKINGS LOOK EGYPTIAN, LIEUTENANT - TH NK THEY RE TERRORISTS?
UNTIL WE LEARN OTHERWISE, SIMMONS WE'LL HAVE TO ASSUME SO.'
ALL RIGHT 'YOU 'N THE PLANE! COME ON OUT!
KROMP
JIH GO BACK IN=
HEATHEN MAGGOTS! YOU WILL BE THE FIRST CASUALTIES IN THE WAR OF THE LIVING MONOLITH!
YOU WANT US TO FIGHT THAT?!?
LIEUTENANT! TH THAT GUY LOOKS LIKE HE'S 30 FEET TALL!
STAND FAST, MEN! GIVE 'IM EVERY THING YOU'VE GOT!

IT AIN'T ENOUGH.
READY, SHE-HULK? THREE... TWO... ONE--
HOLD IT
BIP
THAT'S THE MONITOR ALERT SYSTEM!
IT'S TIED IN WITH THE METRO EMERGENCY CONTROL CIRCUIT!
WE NEED THIS NOW?
OH, NO!
SOME KIND OF GIANT JUST TRASHED HALF OF LAGUARDIA--
--AND NOW IT'S HEADING FOR MANHATTAN!
AND GET THIS: FOLKS AT THE SCENE SAY THE CREATURE REFERRED TO ITSELF AS "THE LIVING MONOLITH."
ACCORDING TO THE AVENGERS FILES, THAT'S ANOTHER ONE OF ABDOL'S ALIASES.
WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE EAST RIVER BEFORE--
BUT, CAP! WHAT ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR? HADN'T WE BETTER--
I'M SORRY SHE-HULK BUT THERE'S A CITY FULL OF INNOCENT PEOPLE OUT THERE, DEPENDING ON US FOR PROTECTION, AND THOUGH I DON'T MEAN TO BE CRUEL... WE HAVE NO ASSURANCE THAT THE FF ARE EVEN STILL ALIVE!
SOMETIMES, THE TRUTH HURTS SOMETIMES...
...IT JUST NUMBS.


AND IN MOMENTS...
ACCORDING TO THIS UPDATE, THE MONOLITH HAS ALREADY COME ASHORE NEAR THE EAST SIDE DOCKS! RIGHT ABOUT--
-- THERE!
THAT'S ODD...
DIDN'T THE EARLIER REPORT SAY THAT HE WAS ABOUT 30' TALL?
YEAH, BUT NOW HE'S GOTTA BE SIXTY FEET IF HE'S AN INCH!
THEN THE MONSTER MUST STILL BE GROWING!
GREAT! MORE GOOD NEWS!
HADN'T WE BETTER CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS? THE X-MEN? THE DEFENDERS? SOMEONE?
NO TIME, SHE-HULK! UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES CAN SEND IN TROOPS OF THEIR OWN--
"--WE'LL HAVE TO HANDLE THIS --
CRUNCH
"--OURSELVES!"

DIDN'T HURT HIM, I DIDN'T EXPECT TO.
BUT BY MAKING MYSELF A TARGET, I CAN BUY TIME FOR THE LOCAL CIVILIANS TO GET OUT OF THE WAY!
KRAKASH
WHICH, COME TO THINK OF IT, MIGHT BE GOOD ADVICE FOR ME TOO!
TALK ABOUT BIG! THIS GUY COULD GIVE THE STAY-PUFT MARSHMALLOW MAN A RUN ▬ ▮▮▮ MONEY!
SO I'D BETTER GIVE HIM--
--A QUICK TASTE OF SPIDER-WEBBING
FFFFWIITT
THERE! THAT OUGHTA NAIL HIM DOWN LIKE--
-- UH, AN OLD WAD OF BUBBA BUBBA? SHEESH
LOOKS LIKE THIS CALLS FOR A MORE DIRECT APPROACH!
LIKE MY ONE AND ONLY PATENTED SPIDEY HAYMAKER!
BROKK

MY...M-MY BEST SHOT! AGH!
A-AND SHOULDER PADS "THERE--
DIDN'T EVEN BLINK!
INFIDELS! YOUR KIND KILLED MY WIFE
AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF MY DAUGHTER! NOW NO ONE CAN SAVE YO--
--?!
AHA SUBARU! GOT YOUR ATTENTION, DID IT?
SO LET'S SEE WHAT A GOOD OLD AMERICAN-MADE CADDY CAN DO!

KRRRANGK
THANK YOU DE-TROIT.
LITTLE WOMAN...
CHUNNNG
...YOU BOTHER ME.
WHUMMPSH
CITY'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A BATTLEFIELD! CASUALTIES MOUNTING--
H-HELP!
CHERAK!
--TOO FAST!
LOOK AT 'EM. CAP'S SAVING LIVES, SHE-HULK'S AHEAD ON POINTS--
--AND I'M STANDING AROUND MAKING ABOUT AS MUCH DIFFERENCE AS A SPITBALL IN THE WIND!
I SHOULD'VE STAYED HOME AND READ A GOOD BOOK
OR EVEN A BAD ONE! OR--
-AHHH, THE HECK WITH IT

CAP! SPIDEY'S TAKING IT ON THE LAM! I-I NEVER FIGURED HIM TO BE A COWARD
HE'S NOT, SHE-HULK. WHATEVER HE'S DOING, I'M SURE HE'S GOT A REASON. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO--
--LOOK OUT!
WHA--?
NOW, LITTLE WOMAN YOU SHALL BOTHER ME NO MORE!
SPAK
KHOOM
KRETCH
PRISH
KASH
POOM
SHE-HULK!
THIS MIGHT TAKE LONGER THAN I THOUGHT

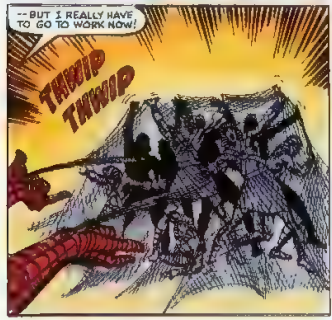
THE BAXTER BUILDING.
"WISE TACTICS."
" STRONGEST AMONG US "
" SHE-HULK GOES "
CAP, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO MAKE A GUY FEEL GOOD!
'COURSE, THE WAY MY SPIDER-SENSE IS TINGLING, WARNING ME OF DANGER, HE COULD WELL BE RIGHT!
BUT JUST ABOUT NOW--
-I REALLY DON'T GIVE A DAMN
PLIK
WELL, WHADYA KNOW? IT ACTUALLY--
WORKS!
THE MASTER'S TRANS-PORTER! I-IT HAS BEEN ACTIVATED!
BUT THE MASTER WAS TOO LARGE TO--
IT IS NOT THE MASTER!
IT IS AN INFIDEL.
"KILL HIM!"
KILL HIM!
EVERY TIME.

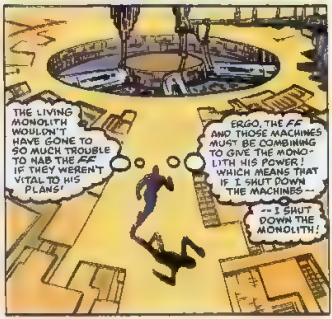
BUT AT LEAST THESE GUYS ARE MORE MY SPEED! SIXTY-FOOT GIANTS ARE ONE THING--

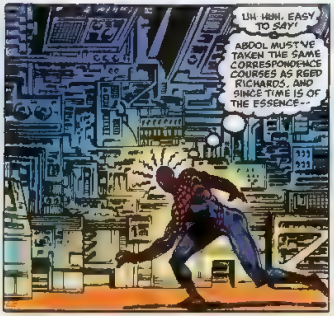
--BUT GIVE ME AN ARMY OF SLOW-WITTED MUSCLE AND I'L... TAKE 'EM OUT EVERY--

--TIME? THOSE GLASS COFFINS!
IT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

SORRY, GUYS! BEATING YOU INTO MYSTERY MEAT HAS BEEN GREAT FOR MY EGO--

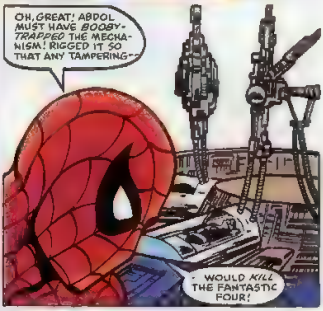

--BUT I REALLY HAVE TO GO TO WORK NOW!
THWIP THWIP


THE LIVING MONOLITH WOULDN'T HAVE GONE TO SO MUCH TROUBLE TO NAB THE FF IF THEY WEREN'T VITAL TO HIS PLANS!
ERGO, THE FF AND THOSE MACHINES MUST BE COMBINING TO GIVE THE MONOLITH HIS POWER! WHICH MEANS THAT IF I SHUT DOWN THE MACHINES--
--I SHUT DOWN THE MONOLITH!


UH HUH. EASY TO SAY!
ABDOL MUST'VE TAKEN THE SAME CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AS REED RICHARDS, AND SINCE TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE--

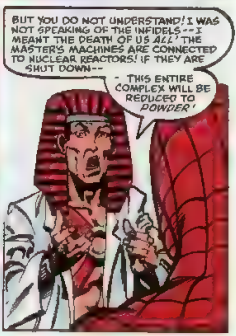
--IT LOOKS LIKE BRUTE STRENGTH IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO--

NO! DESTROYING THE MASTER'S MACHINES--
--WOULD MEAN DEATH!


OH, GREAT! ABDOL MUST HAVE BOOBY-TRAPPED THE MECHANISM! RIGGED IT SO THAT ANY TAMPERING--
- WOULD KILL THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

BUT THE LONGER THE MACHINES RUN, THE LONGER THE MONOLITH'S RAMPAGE WILL LAST!
HUNDREDS COULD DIE! THOUSANDS!

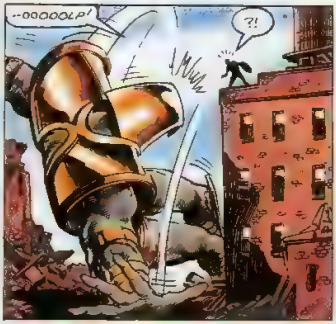
AGAINST THE LIVES OF THREE FRIENDS.


BUT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! I WAS NOT SPEAKING OF THE INFIDELS--I MEANT THE DEATH OF US ALL! THE MASTER'S MACHINES ARE CONNECTED TO NUCLEAR REACTORS! IF THEY ARE SHUT DOWN--
- THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX WILL BE REDUCED TO POWDER!

ALONG WITH THE CITY ABOVE US - CAIRO!
WHAT?! ABDOL'S HIDEOUT WAS BUILT RIGHT UNDER--?
GREAT. CAIRO LIVES MANHATTAN DIES! MANHATTAN LIVES, CAIRO DIES!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING
BUT WHAT?
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO, DISBELIEVERS!
YOUR BUILDINGS ARE LIKE STRAW BEFORE ME!
YOUR PEOPLE LIKE LICE, TO BE SMEARED ON THE HEELS OF MY--
--EH? CHILDREN! THIS...THIS PLACE IS A SCHOOL!--LIKE THE ONE...WHERE I MET--
FILENE
HE'S HESITATING! DON'T KNOW WHY--
BUT THIS COULD BE OUR ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO PREVENT MORE BLOODSHED!

ABDOL! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO REASON!
REASON?
WHAT IS "REASON"?
CHILDREN ARE CRUEL, AVENGER, AND ADULTS ARE NO BETTER... WITH NO BETTER REASON.
" THEY TAUNT, THEY HURT... THEY DESTROY WHAT THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND, KILL WHAT THEY CANNOT POSSESS.
THEY ARE EVIL BEINGS
NO! YOU'RE WRONG! SOME PEOPLE MAY BE ROTTEN TO THE CORE, DOWNRIGHT INHUMAN -
--BUT FOR EVERY ONE OF THEM THERE ARE DOZENS OF DECENT, CARING CITIZENS!
THE WORLD IS FULL OF GOOD AND EVIL!
YOUR PHILOSOPHY S TOO S.MP.E-- HOW S ONE TO TELL THE TWO APART?
TAKE POSIT ONS!
LORDY, SARGE, THAT SUCKER'S A HUNNERT FEET TALL!
SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T-- BUT YOU CAN'T PUNISH EVERY-ONE FOR THAT!
YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR WIFE AND DAUGHTER, HOW THEY WERE KILLED! BUT DON'T YOU SEE? THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW!
"THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY, THEY HAVE WIVES, DAUGHTERS..
"... SONS, HUSBANDS...
"... SOULS AS KIND AND GENTLE AS THE ONES YOU LOST!
"CAN'T YOU SEE THAT YOU'RE JUST DOING TO THEM WHAT SOMEONE DID TO YOU?!"
LOAD ME!

THERE IS WISDOM IN YOUR WORDS, AVENGER PERHAPS
NO, CORPORAL! NOT YET--!
CHOOM
AAAAAAGGHH!
PWUMPH
A TRICK! IT WAS ALL A RUSE!
YOU LURED ME INTO A TRAP!
YOU FOOLS!
WE HAD A CHANCE--!
YOU ARE THE FOOL, DECEIVER!
AND YOU SHALL DIE A FOO--


--OOOOOLP!
?!

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'D BETTER LEARN, MISTER! WHEN SOMEONE HURTS THE SHE-HULK -

--THE SHE-HULK HURTS BACK!

LITTLE WOMAN, YOU WILL PAY DEARLY FOR
--EH? THAT SOUND!
JET'S SOMEONE'S CALLED IN AN AIR STRIKE!

BUT THIS IS A POPULATED AREA!

WE'LL HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THE SECTOR'S BEEN EVACUATED!
SWELL! I JUST HOPE THE SECTOR KNOWS THAT!

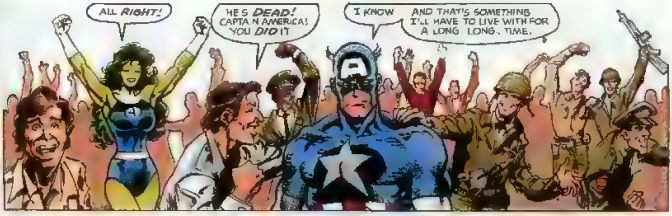
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
THAT GUY'S NOTHING BUT LEFTOVERS NOW!
MAYBE BUT HE WAS A TOUGH MOTHER. WE'D BETTER NOT TAKE CHANCES.
GRIND 'EM SOME MORE!
SHHHHHHHEOW
CEASE FIRE! NOTHING COULD'VE LIVED THROUGH THAT
YOU GUYS FLY A HIGH PATTERN I'M GOING DOWN TO SEE WHAT THE PIECES LOOK LI
OH.
NO..
PRAK-
-KASH

BLUNDERING CRETINS! AS IF ANYTHING COULD STOP THE WRATH OF THE LIVING MONOLITH!
"CAP! HE'S GROWN, EVEN BIGGER AND FASTER!"
BUT HE'S MOVING MORE PONDEROUSLY AS IF HIS CREATED MASS WERE SLOWING HIM DOWN! STILL
"--EVEN AT A SLOWER PACE, HIS DESTRUCTIVE FORCE IS AWESOME."
AND THAT'S NOT OUR ONLY PROBLEM, CAP! LOOK.
WHA--SPARKS!
THAT LAST FOOTSTEP TORE OPEN A CONED POWER CABLE! LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ENOUGH JUICE SPEWING OUT TO PAROOL A HERD OF RHINOS!
SOLDER! GIVE ME THAT WALKIE TALKIE AND PATCH ME THROUGH TO CONSOLIDATED EDISON - FAST!
WHAT? IT'S YOUR MAIN FEED LINE? ENOUGH ELECTRICITY TO POWER THE ENTIRE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN??
SHUT IT DOWN MAN! NOW!
BUT...

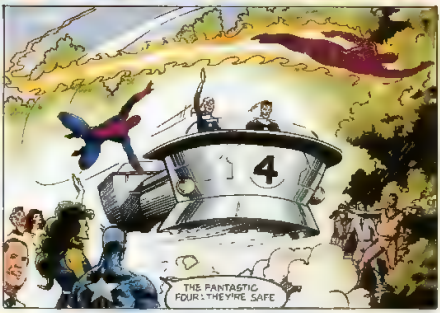
BE READY TO TURN IT BACK ON, AT ONCE AND AT FULL FORCE, WHEN I GIVE THE WORD!
SHE HULK, PULL ENOUGH OF THAT CABLE FROM THE GROUND TO GIVE YOU SOME MOBILITY AND RANGE.
OH, I GET IT.
WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
I JUST HOPE THAT LUNATIC DOESN'T SPATTER WHEN HE FRIES! MAYBE WE SHOULD
SHE-HULK!!
WE'RE ABOUT TO POSSIBLY KILL A MAN I DON'T CONSIDER THAT A CAUSE FOR LEVITY.
I-I'M SORRY CAP
AND SOON...
ABDOL!
WHA ?
YOU! TRICKSTER!
YOU'LL NOT ESCAPE ME THIS TIME!
I DON'T INTEND TO..
BE CAREFUL CAP. THAT PSYCHO'S MAD!

HE TOOK THE BAIT, SHE HULK! HE'S HEADING THIS WAY! STAND READY!
GOTCHA!
BARBAROUS WORMSPAWN!
GIVE ME THE HORN!
Y YES SIR!
THAT'S IT, BIGFOOT! JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER!
STEADY. THERE. STEADY.
GO!!
CHUNG!
NOW!

BZZHHZH
EEEEYAARRGGH!!
GH
Gk
WHUMP!


ALL RIGHT!
HE'S DEAD! CAPTAIN AMERICA! YOU DID IT
I KNOW
AND THAT'S SOMETHING I'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH FOR A LONG LONG TIME.

CHEER UP CAP! HERE COMES SOMETHING THAT MIGHT MAKE THAT A TITLE EASIER
WHAT--?

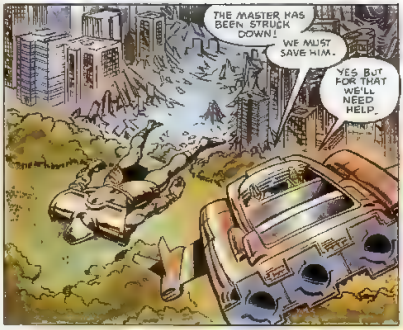

4
THE FANTASTIC FOUR: THEY'RE SAFE

WELCOME HOME, GUYS.
T'S GREAT TO BE BACK, GREEN'
GOOD WORK, SON BUT HOW?
IT WASN'T EASY CAP

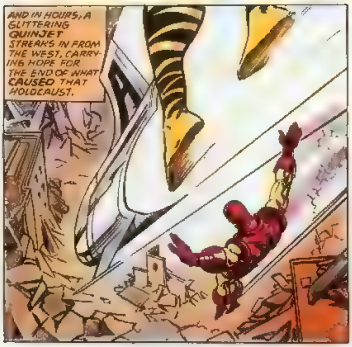
BUT IT WAS S-MPLE ABDOL WAS USING THE F F TO FOCUS THE COSM C ENERGY THAT MADE HIM GROW AND HE HAD H S MACHINES RIGGED TO EXP-ODE F THEY WERE TURNED OFF, SO-
--I TURNED THEM UP FULL INSTEAD, HOPING THEY'D OVERLOAD AND SHUT THEM-SELVES DOWN SAFELY!
WHICH THEY DID!
HMMM, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE MONOLITH'S ACCELERATED GROWTH!

AND WHILE THE FANTASTIC FOUR WERE PULLING OVER THAT, I WAS ABLE TO FREE THE F F AND GET US TO THE TRANSPORT PYRAMID BEFORE HEY! WHAT'S THAT RUMBLING?
OVER THERE

"THAT BUILDING'S IT LOOKS LIKE THE MONOLITH'S ARM KNOCKED IT OVER."
"IMPOSSIBLE, SHE-HULK. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DEATH TWITCH."
"BUT HIS ARM SIN THE SAME POSITION AS WHEN HE COLAPSED AND WHEN HE FELL. HE WAS NOWHERE NEAR THAT BUILDING! HE-OH MY GOD CAP. HIS EYES!"
"THEY'RE OPEN! HE'S WATCHING US!"
HIS MASS MUST HAVE BEEN THE REAL CAUSE OF HIS COLLAPSE. THE ELECTRICITY ONLY WEAKENED HIM. IT DIDN'T KILL.
BUT IF HE HASN'T MOVED AND HE STILL KNOCKED DOWN THAT BUILDING
YES SUE..
-THE LIVING MONOLITH IS STILL GROWING!
"HE'S APPARENTLY REACHED A SIZE WHERE HE IS ABLE TO OVERR DE NTERFERENCE NATURALLY AND S NOW ABLE TO ABSORB COSM C RAYS ON AN UNLIMITED BAS S!"
BUT HOW LARGE CAN HE GROW?
"THEORETICALLY, CAPTAIN, THERE ARE NO BOUNDARIES."
"HE COULD GROW TO THE SIZE OF MANHATTAN, OR EVEN NEW YORK STATE, OR BEYOND."
"IT APPEARS THAT THE LIVING MONOLITH MAY HAVE HIS REVENGE AFTER ALL..."


THE MASTER HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN!
WE MUST SAVE HIM.
YES BUT FOR THAT WE'LL NEED HELP.

I AGREE, CAPTAIN! BUT FOR THAT WE NEED HELP.
FABBOL STAYS WHERE HE IS. HE COULD SINK MANHATTAN WE'VE GOT TO MOVE HIM.
ASSENT IS NODDED, CALLS ARE MADE. IN MINUTES, LOCAL HEROES RALLY TO THE AID OF THE RED CROSS AND NATIONAL GUARD TEAMS, SOOTHING THE MYRIAD TRAGEDIES WROUGHT BY THE MONOLITH'S MAD RAMPAGE.


AND IN HOURS, A GLITTERING QUINJET STREAKS IN FROM THE WEST, CARRYING HOPE FOR THE END OF WHAT CAUSED THAT FOULDUST.

FOR EVEN AS THOR AND IRON MAN LAND GENTLY, THE QUIETING QUINJET RELINQUISHES WONDER-MAN, STRIKE-FOX AND HAWKEYE AVENGERS ALL, AND FIVE OF THE MIGHTIEST MEN ON EARTH

...LITERALLY DWARFED BY THE HUMAN MOUNTAIN THAT LES SPRAWLED BEFORE THEM
ANY THING I CAN DO?
NO THANKS CAP, YOU HAD THE IDEA--WE'LL HANDLE THE EXECUTION
LEAST WAYS WE'LL TRY!

THIS CABLE IS MADE OF ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN - BUT EVEN IT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO HOLD THIS SUCKER
WELL JUST HAVE TO HOPE THOR'S LITTLE SIDEKICK DOES HIS JOB.
"THOR'S LITTLE SIDEKICK" IS THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR, A HAMMER FORGED IN THE LEGENDARY REALM OF ASGARD...

A TOOL AND A WEAPON THAT IS QUICKLY LASHED TO THE FREE END OF THE ADAMANTIUM STRAND. THEN SWUNG WITH THE ROAR OF A WHIRLWIND!
--AND LAUNCHED WITH THE POWER OF A GOD!
ALL OF WHICH MAKE THE RESULTS EVEN MORE SURPRISING.
TWANG!
HE HE HARDLY MOVED AT ALL!
THE MONSTER'S MASS MUST BE ASTONISHING INDEED TO RESIST SUCH A MIGHTY THROW.
DON'T TRUST TOO HARD, THOR. AT LEAST THINGS CAN'T GET WORSE.
WANNA BET?
ODD. I AM THE GOD OF THUNDER. I SHOULD HAVE SENSED THE APPROACH OF STORM CLOUDS.
"MAYBE SO, BUT THOSE AREN'T CLOUDS! THEY'RE A SOLID WALL OF METAL. THE GODS FOLLOWERS! HUNDREDS OF 'EM. THOUSANDS!"

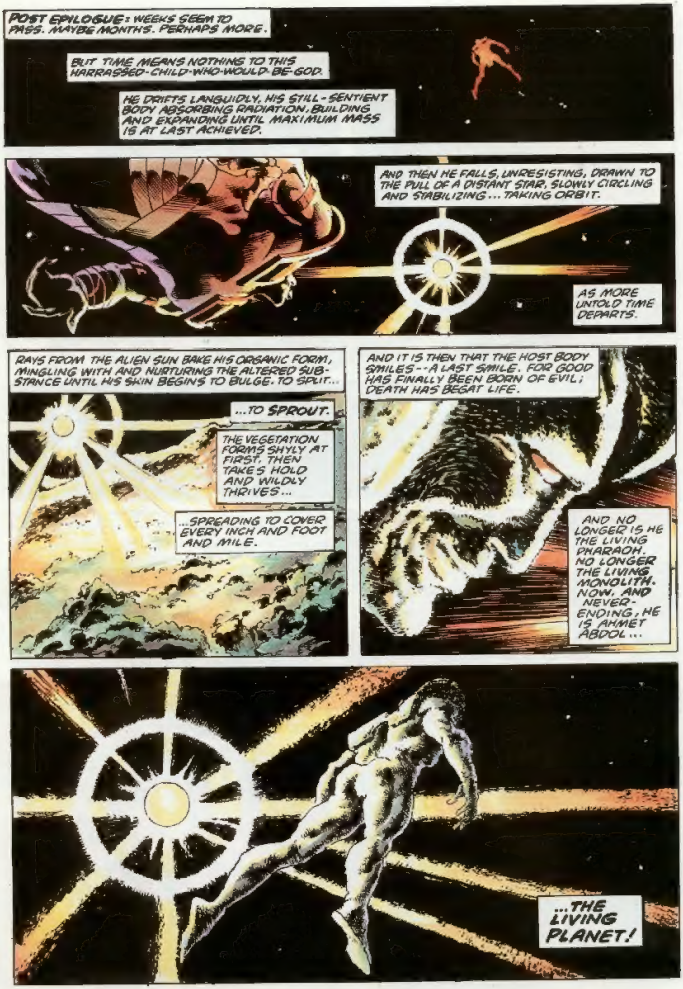
LORD...NO! M'AY SON IS ALREADY DEAD! MY HOME DESTROYED!
WHAT HAVE WE DONE?
PLEASE.. NO MORE..!
THE GIANTS ARE SO UNHEEDED!
THE HORROR BEGINS...
LOOK AT THEM. RUNNING LIKE FRIGHTENED HARES! EVEN WEAKENED AND IMMOBILE, I'VE POWER ENOUGH TO
" WAIT! THEY'RE NOT FLEEING THEY'RE RUNNING TO HELP THE COSTUMED WARRIORS?!? BUT "

WHY ?
MUCH AS I GLORY IN THE THRILL OF COMBAT, IRON MAN, I FEAR THAT THIS IS ONE BATTLE WE CANNOT WIN!
YOU COULD BE RIGHT, 'FOX.' I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY -
SHUT UP, YOU TWO! AN' JUST KEEP SHOOTIN'!
OH, NO! IT'S COMING AFTER ME!
LOOK OUT! I'LL GET OUT OF THE--
SHRAPP!!!
YAAAAGH!
THAT MAN! HE GAVE HIS LIFE. FOR A CHILD HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND?!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T LISTENING, ABDOL!
EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU WAS THE TRUTH!
MOST PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD ARE GOOD; DEEP DOWN! MOST WOULD HAVE BEEN DISGUSTED AT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMILY! THEY WOULD HAVE SYMPATHIZED WITH YOU, HELPED YOU....IF YOU'D LET THEM!
BUT INSTEAD YOU'VE PUNISHED THEM, TAKEN YOUR BLIND ANGER OUT ON INNOCENTS.
...WHO HAVEN'T DONE A BLESSED THING TO DESERVE IT!

COULD IT... BE TRUE? H-HAVE I MERELY SOUGHT... TO EASE MY OWN PAIN...
...BY INFLICTING IT ON OTHERS? DID MY ONLY DAUGHTER REALLY DIE --
-- BECAUSE OF MY OBSESSION? OH, GODS... WHAT...
...WH-WHAT HAVE I ...?
STOP!
THOR, FLING YOUR HAMMER.
IT IS TIME FOR THE MADNESS TO END.
BUT, I KNOW NOT WHAT A SECOND TOSS COULD--
THERE'S A WAY. YOU MUST TRY.
PLEASE...
WITH THE GODLY EQUIVALENT OF A SHRUG, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER ONCE MORE TWIRLS HIS MYSTIC MALLET.
WHILE, AT HIS SIDE, THE LIVING MONOLITH STRUGGLES TO MOVE, FIGHTING GRAVITY TO RAISE EVEN AN ARM, TREMBLING AS HE SHIFTS UNCOUNTED THOUSANDS OF TONS.

THEN, AS MJOLNIR REACHES OPTIMUM SPEED, THOR HURLS THE HAMMER HIGH--
--AND A MILE OF GLEAMING ADAMANTIUM CABLE UNCOILS--
--AS THE LIVING MONOLITH GRIMACES, STRUGGLING TO ONE KNEE--
--TOILING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE AND--
--AS MJOLNIR REACHES APEX AND PULLS THE METAL LINE TAUT--
--ACHIEVING IT!
WITH AN IMPACT THAT CRACKS THE VERY GROUND, QUAKES STEEL BUILDINGS AND SENDS WATCHERS TO THEIR KNEES, AKHET ABDOL FLEXES AND SPRINGS--
--HIS LEAP GIVING MJOLNIR THE EDGE IT NEEDS TO BREAK INERTIA AND CARRY HIM FROM THE EARTH, LIFTING HIM SLOWLY SKYWARD.
TH-THE MASTER IS LEAVING! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE!
WE FOLLOW!

ABOVE, AT THE VERY EDGE OF THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERIC ENVELOPE, MJOLNIR STOPS ABRUPTLY, AS IF SENSING THAT IT IS TIME TO RETURN TO IT'S MASTER.
AND SO THE ENCHANTED HAMMER TURNS SHARPLY, STREAKING EARTHWARD WITH A WHIPLIKE MOTION--
--THAT SNAPS MJOLNIR'S SUDDENLY-TAUT LEATHERN THONG--
SPARK
--AND LEAVES THE ODDLY PEACEFUL MONOLITH TO SAIL SILENTLY BEYOND THE SWAY OF PLANETARY GRAVITY--
--WAFTING AS IF WINDBLOWN TOWARDS THE VAST DEPTHS OF LIMITLESS SPACE.
EPILOGUE: HOUR'S LATER.
FAR AWAY. EARTH.
WE'VE DONE ALL WE CAN HERE, CAP. THINK WE SHOULD GO JOIN THE OTHERS IN HELPING THE EMERGENCY TEAMS?
CAP?
AND THAT TROUBLES ME.
WHA--OH, SORRY, SHE-HULK. MY MIND WAS WANDERING. I MAY NOT HAVE ACTUALLY KILLED A MAN TODAY, BUT I MADE THE DECISION TO.
HEY, YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT ANGST?
I CAME FACE-TO-MASK WITH THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS I JUST CAN'T HANDLE!
TRY JUMPING THAT HURDLE SOME TIME!
I GUESS WE'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH A LOT TODAY.
BUT NOT AS MUCH AS THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY -- PEOPLE WE'VE SWORN TO PROTECT, PEOPLE WHO NEED OUR HELP.
SO LET'S GIVE THAT HELP, FOCUS OUR ENERGIES THERE, AND WORRY ABOUT SOLVING OUR OWN PROBLEMS WHEN WE CAN. WHEN...
...AND IF


POST EPILOGUE: WEEKS SEEM TO PASS. MAYBE MONTHS. PERHAPS MORE.
BUT TIME MEANS NOTHING TO THIS HARRASSED-CHILD-WHO-WOULD-BE-GOD.
HE DRIFTS LANGUIDLY, HIS STILL-SENTIENT BODY ABSORBING RADIATION. BUILDING AND EXPANDING UNTIL MAXIMUM MASS IS AT LAST ACHIEVED.
AND THEN HE FALLS, UNRESISTING, DRAWN TO THE PULL OF A DISTANT STAR, SLOWLY CIRCLING AND STABILIZING... TAKING ORBIT.
AS MORE UNTOLD TIME DEPARTS.
RAYS FROM THE ALIEN SUN BAKE HIS ORGANIC FORM, MINGLING WITH AND NURTURING THE ALTERED SUBSTANCE UNTIL HIS SKIN BEGINS TO BULGE. TO SPLIT...
...TO SPROUT.
THE VEGETATION FORMS SHYLY AT FIRST, THEN TAKES HOLD AND WILDLY THRIVES...
...SPREADING TO COVER EVERY INCH AND FOOT AND MILE.
AND IT IS THEN THAT THE HOST BODY SMILES--A LAST SMILE. FOR GOOD HAS FINALLY BEEN BORN OF EVIL; DEATH HAS BEGAT LIFE.
AND NO LONGER IS HE THE LIVING PHARAOH. NO LONGER THE LIVING MONOLITH. NOW. AND NEVER-ENDING; HE IS AMMET ABDOL...
...THE LIVING PLANET!